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Mrs Gillian Massar
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Massar

Short inspection of William Bellamy Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 20 November 2018 with Diane Rochford, Ofsted Inspector, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in April 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You, the leadership team and a proactive, skilled and knowledgeable governing body have an accurate and honest understanding of the school's current strengths and weaknesses. From this, you have been able to plan and implement effective strategies that have underpinned the steady improvement in pupils' outcomes at the end of each key stage in reading, writing and mathematics. Outcomes in these areas are broadly in line with national averages.

Senior leaders respond well to staff. Speaking with me, and through their responses to Ofsted's staff survey, staff say that you and other senior colleagues are highly supportive. They appreciate the opportunities they are given to help improve the quality of their teaching and the opportunities they have to develop their professional careers. Parents and carers are very positive about the school and your leadership. One parent stated that their children had 'thrived immensely' and that the school that was 'well managed, with strong leaders who look after not only the children, but the parents and the teachers too... it feels like home from home'. This was a view echoed by many parents.

During the inspection, pupils were confident, polite and articulate, talking openly with inspectors. They spoke warmly about the support and experience they receive at school and reported that they enjoy their time at the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding policies and procedures are in place and are fit for purpose. Pre-employment checks on adults working at the school meet statutory requirements. All staff have regular and appropriate training. Staff who spoke with me understood how to respond to any concerns should they arise. Leaders are, however, aware of the need to remind staff about the most recent changes to the policy. Records are well organised and show that referrals are handled in a timely manner. Emphasis is placed on effective early intervention leading to swift support for pupils and families who need it.

Aspects of the curriculum have been designed to heighten pupils' awareness of safety issues beyond the school, including road safety, the risks of extremism, gang affiliation and knife crime, and making the right choices to ensure that pupils stay safe online. Pupils spoken to during the inspection could identify confidently a number of ways in which the school keeps them safe. They know what to do if they ever feel unsafe and could identify a number of trusted adults in the school.

Pupils describe behaviour at the school as 'fantastic' and that the systems for ensuring positive behaviour work effectively. This view was echoed by parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, who were overwhelmingly positive about pupils' safety in school.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed three lines of enquiry. The first focused on the actions taken by leaders to ensure that pupils' attendance is improving over time. This was because pupil absence, including those who are persistently absent from school, has been greater than that it is nationally over recent years.
- Leaders, including governors, have rightly prioritised improving attendance, and have been more robust in challenging and supporting families. As a result, analysis is detailed and identifies well the different challenges experienced by families.
- Targeted strategies, such as home visits, challenging term-time appointments and holidays, and engaging the support of other agencies such as the school nurse, have resulted in improved attendance. Attendance is currently broadly in line with the national average. Although levels of persistent absence are also improving steadily, they are still higher than the national average.
- The second line of enquiry focused on the actions leaders have taken to increase the progress made by the most able children in mathematics. This is because fewer of these pupils reach the higher standards in mathematics than those nationally.
- The leadership of mathematics is knowledgeable and ambitious. Leaders are highly committed to pupils achieving their best. Teachers' knowledge and confidence have been well developed through a range of professional development opportunities. As a result, teachers are well supported in increasing

pupils' mathematical fluency by setting challenging problems for pupils to solve.

- Work in pupils' books demonstrates that the mathematics curriculum covers a broad range of well-developed concepts. There is evidence of further challenge that typically involves opportunities for pupils to reason, and to justify and explain their mathematical thinking. Teachers draw increasingly well on prior learning and model new concepts in detail. As a result, the majority of pupils access learning effectively and when misconceptions arise, they are dealt with swiftly.
- Visits to lessons and discussions with pupils demonstrate that they are highly motivated in tackling the greater level of challenge. Pupils demonstrate a mature attitude to collaborative learning, supporting and challenging their peers to explain their thinking clearly. Pupils' verbal and written explanations of mathematical concepts and strategies are detailed and use precise vocabulary well.
- Teachers do not always ensure that pupils have a secure enough grasp of the foundational skills required to solve the challenging mathematical problems that face them. As a result, these pupils do not access learning as swiftly as they could.
- The final line of enquiry focused on the effectiveness of leaders' actions to ensure that pupils who enter the school with skills lower than those typical for their age are supported in making strong progress. This was because you and the leadership team identified this area as a particular strength of the school.
- Children enter early years with skills below those typical for their age. Leaders have responded to this by planning and implementing initiatives to support children to achieve better outcomes. Changes to the curriculum and environment heighten opportunities for children to engage in language-rich, challenging learning activities. As a result, children engage well, are confident to speak about their learning, speak in full sentences and use a range of increasingly complex vocabulary. This has resulted in steadily improving outcomes at the end of early years each year over the last three years.
- In the additional resource provision, which caters for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs, leaders have used detailed assessments to prioritise developing independence to engage pupils who find it challenging to access learning.
- The structured environment allows the needs of pupils with a range of complex needs to be met through small, focused groups, and a curriculum based on broadening the experiences and interests of the pupils within an environment that supports pupils' stage of learning whatever their age and needs. As a result, pupils demonstrate increasing independence in the choices they make, and they take great pride in their work.
- Through monitoring and evaluation of the additional resource provision, you and other senior leaders acknowledge that processes for checking pupils' progress across the wider curriculum now need to be as rigorous as they are in English and mathematics.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers use assessment information consistently to ensure that pupils have the component mathematical skills necessary to tackle the challenging problem solving provided to them
- the assessment processes in the additional resource provision support teachers in making accurate judgements in subjects beyond English and mathematics
- the initiatives designed to reduce persistent absenteeism are embedded to ensure that all pupils at risk of low attendance are supported in attending school regularly.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Barking and Dagenham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Nick Turvey
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

The inspection began with a discussion of your self-evaluation and we agreed the key lines of enquiry. Together, we visited lessons and looked at pupils' work. Inspectors listened to a group of pupils reading, and spoke to them about their learning and how the school helps to keep them safe. Meetings were held with those responsible for leading mathematics, early years, inclusion, safeguarding and attendance. I met a group of governors and also met the school improvement consultant.

I reviewed a range of the school's documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, development plan and single central record of employment checks. I also considered responses to the staff survey, pupil survey and Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents.